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BIG DROP IN INDIA'S SULPHUR DIOXIDE EMISSIONS IN 2019

The country was nonetheless the world's top SO_2 emitter for the fifth consecutive year, a study by Greenpeace India found

ACCOUNTS FOR 21% OF GLOBAL EMISSIONS

The 6 per cent fall recorded in 2019 was the steepest decrease in India's SO_2 emissions in four years. The Greenpeace report, prepared in collaboration with the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, cited a reduction in the burning of coal as the main reason. However, despite the dip, India accounted for 21 per cent of the global SO_2 emissions in 2019 P7

CHENNAI, VIZAG AMONG THE HOTSPOTS

- The top emission hotspots from India include thermal power stations in Singrauli, Neyveli, Korba, Chennai, Ramagundam, Visakhapatnam, Talcher, Kutch, Surat, Chandrapur and Koradi
- The report noted that most power plants in India lack flue-gas desulphurisation units, which are critical in cutting So_2 emissions

SO_2

EMISSIONS INCREASE THE RISK OF HEART DISEASES AND LUNG CANCER

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

RAIN OF FIRE

An Indian Air Force Sukhoi Su-30MKI jet fires flares during a parade to mark the 88th Air Force Day at Hindon Air Base in Ghaziabad, on Thursday | PARVEEN NEGI

Freedom of speech among most abused recently: CJI

Chief Justice of India Bobde tears apart Centre's affidavit on Tablighi Jamaat issue, says it's full of unnecessary & nonsensical averments

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

FREEDOM of speech is one of the most abused freedoms in recent times, the Supreme Court said on Thursday while pulling up the Central government for its affidavit in which it has denied that media reports linking the initial spurt in coronavirus cases in India to the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in Delhi were fake.

The court said the affidavit was full of unnecessary and nonsensical averments.

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India S A Bobde was hearing a batch of petitions alleging that a section of the media was spreading communal hatred over the congregation that took place in Delhi's Nizamuddin Markaz in March. The petitioners wanted the court to lay down guidelines on curbing fake news.

The government's affidavit spoke about the need for press freedom and said dissemination of facts by the media, even though they may appear to be offensive or distasteful to certain individuals or sections of the society, cannot be curtailed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.

CJI Bobde, however, called the affidavit evasive and expressed disappointment over a junior officer signing it. "You cannot treat this court the way you are treating. Your junior officer, additional secretary (information and broadcasting ministry), has filed the affidavit," he said.

"You have the secretary of this department file an affidavit without making such nonsensical averments stating the petitioners have not shown any instance of bad media report-

Brazen logic

"Affidavit brazenly says that the petitioners have not pointed out any instance of bad reporting. To say that you don't agree with the petitioners is one thing but how can you say there is no incident pointed out?" the CJI fumed

ing," the CJI said and asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to ensure that a fresh affidavit is filed.

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, who was representing the petitioner, submitted that the government has claimed that the issue involves muzzling of free speech.

"Freedom of speech is one of the most abused freedoms of recent times," CJI Bobde remarked. The court also asked the government to bring on record all statutes with regard to regulating TV channels.

Referring to Section 20 of the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, the bench said the Act only covers cable TV signals, and asked if the government had the power to ban the signals. "This power is exercisable only in relation to cable TV networks and not in relation to TV signals like Doordarshan, etc. Does the government have any power to ban the signals? Their affidavit says they had issued advisories," the CJI said.

SHORT-CHANGED		WINDFALL	
Andhra Pradesh	₹4,800 cr	Maharashtra	₹3,000 cr
Tamil Nadu	₹4,231 cr	Bihar	₹2,900 cr
Delhi	₹3,000 cr	Chhattisgarh	₹915 cr
Telangana	₹2,638 cr	Punjab	₹487 cr
Kerala	₹900 cr		
West Bengal	₹560 cr		

IGST MISMATCH. TECH ERROR OR POLITICAL BIAS?

ANURADHA SHUKLA @New Delhi

UNION Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recently revealed that some states got more than their fair share of Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) while some others received less. While she assured the short-credited states that the entire unsettled IGST dues since 2017-18, totalling ₹24,000 crore, will be disbursed in a week's time, she said those who were given excess money will not have to return it. While the finance ministry blames devolution error for the payout mismatch, a cursory look at the list of states that were short-changed and those that got a windfall shows a possible political bias.

According to data reviewed by *TNIE*, most states that got excess IGST are BJP-ruled ones while those who lost out have other parties in power.

Andhra Pradesh was short-credited ₹4,800 crore, Tamil Nadu ₹4,231 crore, Delhi ₹3,000 crore, Telangana ₹2,638 crore, Kerala ₹900 crore and West Bengal ₹560 crore.

As much as ₹1,76,688 crore was pending as unsettled IGST amount at the end of 2017-18, which was transferred to states. However, "wrong devolution happened because, at that time, there was no formula for distribution of the IGST amount between states and the Centre", the finance ministry said.

But was it merely a technical error? According to the latest CAG report, even after a formula for devolution was arrived at, it was not followed properly, resulting in wrong payments yet again.

Among the other states that received more than their fair share of IGST include Bihar, where NDA is in power (₹2,900 crore) and Chhattisgarh, where the BJP was in power in 2018 (₹915 crore). "It was only for 2017-18 when there was a BJP government in the state that Chhattisgarh got ₹915 crore extra as IGST," said T S Singh Deo, Chhattisgarh commercial tax minister.

CURIOUS PAYMENT

Maharashtra received ₹3,000 crore more in 2017-18, when the Devendra Fadnavis-led BJP government was in power. But after government changed the following year, the state was not paid IGST dues. "We are yet to get ₹9,000 crore from the Centre," said Rajgopal Devara, principal secretary (finance), Maharasthra

RAM VILAS PASWAN
5 JULY 1946 ● 8 OCTOBER 2020

HAVE LOST A VALUED COLLEAGUE, SAYS MODI

"I am saddened beyond words. There is a void in our nation that will perhaps never be filled. Shri Ram Vilas Paswan Ji's demise is a personal loss. I have lost a friend, valued colleague," Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted. His interventions during Cabinet meetings were insightful, Paswan said, adding, be it political wisdom or issues of governance and statesmanship, he was brilliant

He was a political contrarian

MANISH ANAND @New Delhi

A master at sniffing out electoral swings and one of the longest serving Union ministers of India, Ram Vilas Paswan passed away on Thursday following cardiac complications, leaving his son and Lok Sabha MP Chirag Paswan to steady the ship of the Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJP) alone in the choppy Bihar elections.

Paswan, 74, was arguably a political contrarian who comfortably settled in the company of Socialists and the BJP with ease.

A fortuitous turn of events had guided him into politics in the late 1960s despite being assured of a job of sub-inspector of police. With Samyukta Socialist Party scouting for a Dalit to contest the 1969 Bihar Assembly elections, Paswan plunged into electoral politics, and took an envious trajectory, becoming part of the troika consisting of Lalu Prasad Yadav and Nitish Kumar in Bihar politics.

He was a doting father to Chirag, arranging a special screening of his debut movie in Parliament annexe. While he was well aware of his political limitations, his son has taken an ambitious decision to go it alone in the forthcoming polls. The LJP could now hope to whip up a sympathy wave across the Gangetic north in Bihar to consolidate its Dalit vote base.

Unlike BSP boss Mayawati, who could script social engineering in Uttar Pradesh, the influence of Paswan's party was confined to a few districts in Bihar like Hajipur, Jamui and Samastipur.

Papa... you are not in this world any more but I know wherever you are, you will always be with me. Miss you papa

- Chirag Paswan, LJP chief

In 2002, he quit the Vajpayee Cabinet criticising its position on the post-Godhra Gujarat riots, and took a strident stand on having a Muslim chief minister in Bihar after the 2005 state polls threw up a fractured mandate and made him the kingmaker.

Two years after exiting the NDA, his party entered the Manmohan Singh-led UPA government in 2004 and he became a Union minister. But by 2014, when the BJP's star was on the ascendant, Paswan had become a vocal supporter of Narendra Modi and joined his government eventually.

"Barah saal me yug badal jaata hai (an era changes in 12 years time)," Paswan would later quip in response to questions on his volte-face on the post-Godhra riots stance. P10

SCHOOLS
CHILD RIGHTS PANEL BATS FOR REOPENING

While the state government is consulting experts and stakeholders, the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights has suggested reopening of schools. However, Prof MR Doreswamy, adviser to the government on education reforms, is for a phased manner of reopening educational institutes starting with colleges. Minister K Gopalaiah said a decision will be taken at a cabinet meeting. P2

Radical outfit's links emerge in NIA probe of B'luru ISIS case; 2 arrested

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

FOR the first time, the name of Hizb-ut-Tehrir (HT) or the 'Party of the Liberation,' a radical Islamist organisation, has found mention in a terror-related investigation in India.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has busted a Bengaluru-based Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)-Daesh module and arrested a business analyst and a rice merchant, who are said to be members of HT and were allegedly part of a religious study circle which was "radicalising gullible Muslim youths in Bengaluru and had funded the travel of some to Syria to join ISIS," said an NIA spokesperson.

The names of two accused — business analyst Ahamed Abdul Cader (40) of Ramanathapuram in Tamil Nadu, and rice merchant Irfan Nasir (33) of Frazer Town in Bengaluru — had cropped up during the interrogation of Dr Abdur Rehman alias Dr Brave, the young ophthalmologist, who was arrested by NIA from Bengaluru in August.

According to the agency, Cader, Nasir and their associates had funded the travel of Rehman and some other Muslim youths from Bengaluru to conflict-ridden Syria in 2013-14. Dr Rehman has reportedly admitted to the NIA that he had attended camps in Syria as a medical student. The NIA arrested Cader and Nasir on October 7 and has reportedly seized incriminating material and electronic devices from their locations in Guruppanapalya and Frazer Town in the city.

Second biggest ISIS module

The NIA, in July, had chargesheeted 17 accused in the Karnataka ISIS module case, including key accused Mehboob Pasha of Bengaluru and Khaja Moiudeen of Cuddalore. This is the second biggest ISIS module unearthed after the 22-member group in Kasargod, Kerala.

The Hizb-ut-Tehrir (HT) is an Islamist group which was founded in 1953 in East Jerusalem by a radical activist, Muhammad Sheikh Taqiuddin-al-Nabhani from Haifa, Jordan. The organisation calls for the establishment of the Caliphate in the Muslim world under the Shariah.

CONTINUED ON: P7

EXPRESS READ

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw 27th richest Indian

Singapore/New Delhi: Biocon chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw is ranked 27th in the Forbes List of India's 100 Richest. She added $2.22 billion to her wealth, taking her net worth to $4.6 billion, from $2.38 billion in 2019. It marked the highest gain in percentage terms at 93.28% among India's 100 richest persons. Meanwhile, Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani remains at No. 1 for the 13th year.

TODAY'S IPL MATCH

RAJASTHAN vs DELHI

Having lost three matches in a row, RR return to Sharjah where they have won two. DC are the team in form. Expect a run-feast between the two.

ODDS: RR 5/4 | DC 8/11

LIVE: STARSPORTS1/HOTSTAR@7.30PM

SAFETY PROTOCOL

Be negative, if you want to meet CM

BANSY KALAPPA @ Bengaluru

ON Thursday, the first visitors who started trickling into Krishna, the CM's Home Office, around 9 am, were surprised to see the security personnel direct them to the makeshift Covid-19 testing centre which has been set up near the entrance gate.

This is because visitors, who have an official appointment to meet Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa at Krishna, will henceforth have to mandatorily get an RT-PCR test done and take the report with them. They will be allowed entry only if they test negative. The new protocol kicked in on Thursday and this is the first time such a restriction has been imposed. Yediyurappa contracted Covid-19 and recovered from it in August.

The testing unit is manned by two health department officials wearing Personal Protection Equipment. Tests were carried out on all visitors, including politicians and bureaucrats. One visitor who met the CM told *TNIE*, "Once the officials collected the swab from the nose and throat, they processed it and returned to me with a negative report in about less than 15 minutes. Only then, I was allowed to enter the CM's (home) office."

A health worker at Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa's home office 'Krishna' in Bengaluru on Thursday | VINOD KUMAR T

Additional Chief Secretary (health) Jawaid Akhtar said, "Every visitor will be tested and only after a test report is negative, is one allowed into the office. It will keep everybody safe."

Yediyurappa had tested positive in August and was admitted in Manipal Hospital for about nine days and discharged after he tested negative. After he returned from the hospital, he was advised mandatory home isolation for about five-six days when he was under the observation of a team of doctors. After completing the term of home isolation, he participated in the Independence Day function on August 15, his first public event after recovering from Covid-19. P3

From 1983, it's been a long journey for fruition of suburban rail project

S LALITHA @Bengaluru

WHILE Bengaluru waits with bated breath for a swanky suburban railway network, which is planned with better safety features, a senior railway official who has seen the entire journey of the Suburban Rail for Bengaluru from the window seat, says, "Finally, a beginning has been made. And it is a good start. But I will say it is very, very late in the day."

As the network is being planned with better trains, the fares will be higher than the Mumbai, Chennai or Kolkata suburban trains. A minimum fare of Rs 13 and a maximum of Rs 100 was proposed by Railway Infrastructure and Technical Engineering Services (RITES), the consultancy firm, which was approved by the Union Government on Wednesday.

The former top official, who is still involved with railway projects post retirement, recalls that the first Transportation Survey was commissioned by the State Government, headed by R Gundu Rao, in 1983 to explore all possible forms of mass transport options for the City. A 58-km stretch, with three circular routes, was proposed by an expert team from the then Southern Railway.

And then it was forgotten. The IT boom slowly began in the city.

"A decade later, the same proposal was proposed by another group which carried out a survey," said the former official who did not want to be named.

Meanwhile, during that period, vital infrastructure projects began taking shape — the International Tech Park at Whitefield, the Outer Ring Road Project, cable-stayed bridge at Krishnarajapuram, etc. P2